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Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations: financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Support account for peacekeeping operations: Lessons Learned Unit

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 51/239 of 17 June 1997, in paragraph 18 of which the Assembly, *inter alia*, requested the Secretary-General to submit, no later than 31 August 1997, proposals on resources and structure to strengthen the lessons learned capacity and to ensure the sharing and application of experience gained in peacekeeping operations.

For the reasons stated in the present report, the Secretary-General resubmits his proposals contained in document A/51/890 (annex I, para. 30) that three new posts (one P-4, one P-2/1 and one General Service level) be created for the Lessons Learned Unit to be funded from the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 January to 30 June 1998.

It is anticipated that the related costs of the three posts can be met within the resources approved by the General Assembly for the support account for the period from 1 July 1997 to 30 June 1998. Accordingly, no additional appropriation is being requested.

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I. Introduction

1. This report is submitted in accordance with paragraph 18 of General Assembly resolution 51/239 of 17 June 1997, in which the Assembly took note of the usefulness of the lessons learned capacity, and requested the Secretary-General to submit, no later than 31 August 1997, for consideration during the third part of its resumed fifty-first session, proposals on resources and structure to strengthen the functions and to ensure the sharing and application of experience gained in peacekeeping operations.

II. Background

2. The Lessons Learned Unit was established in April 1995, in response to recommendations 1 to 4 of the Secretary-General in his progress report to the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the start-up phase of the in-depth evaluation of peacekeeping operations[1] and with recommendation 1 of the Office of Internal Oversight Services in its final report to that Committee on the same subject,[2] to provide the Department of Peacekeeping Operations with a greater capacity for in-depth study and analysis of peacekeeping operations and to develop institutional memory on peacekeeping.

3. It is pertinent to note that the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, at its 1997 session, took note of the useful work being done by the Lessons Learned Unit and recommended that the Secretary-General seek stable, predictable financing for the Unit (see A/52/209, para. 63).

III. Objectives

4. The objectives of the Unit are:

   (a) To extract lessons from ongoing and past peacekeeping operations and recommend their application to improve the planning, management, conduct and support of ongoing and future operations;

   (b) To develop institutional memory on peacekeeping.

IV. Functions and methodology

5. In order to achieve its objectives, the Unit carries out the following activities:

   (a) *Mission-specific analysis:* examination of all aspects of an operation, including how lessons from past peacekeeping operations were applied, what mid-mission lessons were learned during the operation and what adjustments were made, if any, so as to extract new lessons and recommend how they may be applied to ongoing and future operations;

   (b) *Function-oriented analysis:* undertaking thematic studies to examine important aspects common to most peacekeeping operations;

   (c) *Monitoring the implementation of lessons learned:* while implementation remains the responsibility of the concerned department, agency or unit, the Unit monitors the implementation of recommendations through the publication of an annual status report;

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[1] E/AC.51/1994/3 and Corr.1, paras. 8-14.

[2] E/AC.51/1995/2 and Corr.1, annex, paras. 16-18.

(d) *Developing institutional memory on peacekeeping:* the establishment and maintenance of a resource centre where relevant data on peacekeeping is stored, both electronically and in hard copy;

(e) *Special projects or studies:* conducting specific studies and other research assignments at the request of the missions or the Department.

6. The Unit has developed a comprehensive methodology for its studies which is progressively refined in the light of experience gained. The study process is comprehensive and done in close cooperation with all participants in a peacekeeping operation, namely, the mission, troop-contributing countries, the United Nations Secretariat, regional and intergovernmental organizations, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations. The 12-step methodology relating to the study of a peacekeeping mission is as follows:

Step 1. Study available documents and reports on the operation.

Step 2. Interview Department of Peacekeeping Operations desk officers.

Step 3. Interview relevant officials from other departments and specialized agencies.

Step 4. Request assessments from troop-contributing countries.

Step 5. Interview political and military officials of relevant Permanent Missions.

Step 6. Debrief senior mission officials.

Step 7. Circulate a questionnaire to mission officials for feedback (an integrated questionnaire is being developed).

Step 8. Undertake field visits.

Step 9. Consult external experts on the operation.

Step 10. Hold internal consultations within the United Nations system.

Step 11. Hold a comprehensive workshop or seminar with troop-contributing countries, United Nations and peacekeeping mission officials, specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations and experts.

Step 12. Publish lessons learned report.

V. Past activities and reports

7. The Unit has undertaken the following activities:

(a) Comprehensive studies of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR);

(b) Mid-mission assessments of the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) and the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III);

(c) Seminar on public information in field operations, in cooperation with the Department of Public Information (March 1997);

(d) Studies or research on specific subjects as requested by the Department or missions from time to time;

(e) Establishing the Resource Centre to maintain institutional knowledge and records on peacekeeping.

8. The Unit has issued the following reports and documents:

(a) Comprehensive reports and UNOSOM (December 1995) and UNAMIR (December 1996) (in English and French);

(b) Multi-disciplinary peacekeeping: lessons from recent experience (in English and French) (December 1996);

(c) Mid-mission assessment of UNMIH (for internal distribution) (March 1996);

(d) Status report on implementation of lessons learned (for internal distribution) (December 1996).

VI. Programme of work for 1997/1998

9. During the 12-month period from 1 July 1997 to 30 June 1998, the Lessons Learned Unit will undertake studies on UNAVEM I, II and III; on the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and the United Nations Peace Forces (UNPF); and on UNMIH and the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti (UNSMIH). The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations has encouraged the Unit to continue to benefit from the experience of troop-contributing countries, and to use in its work conclusions resulting from their national experience acquired in peacekeeping operations in the field (see A/52/209, para. 63). In accordance with that recommendation, the Unit, while undertaking these studies, will analyse assessments and recommendations received from troop-contributing countries and interview political and military officials of Permanent Missions of those countries — 48 countries for UNAVEM (96 officials to be interviewed), 40 for UNPROFOR/UNPF (80 officials to be interviewed) and 34 for UNMIH/UNSMIH (68 officials to be interviewed), making a total of 244 officials to be interviewed (not including officials of regional organizations, the United Nations Secretariat, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations). In connection with those studies, one or two seminars will be held within the United Nations system and seminars involving troop-contributing countries may also be held.

10. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations has requested the Secretary-General to keep it informed of United Nations experience in mine clearance in peacekeeping operations, taking into account inputs from those involved in such activities (see A/52/209, para. 65). The Unit, therefore, will undertake a study on mine clearance during the current 12-month period.

11. The Special Committee also encouraged the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and regional arrangements and agencies to enhance the capabilities of the international community in the maintenance of international peace and security, and noted the successful experience of cooperation between the United Nations and a number of regional and subregional arrangements and agencies (ibid., para. 87). The Committee encouraged the Secretary-General to continue to discuss cooperation in the field of peacekeeping between the United Nations and regional organizations (ibid., para. 90). A study on lessons learned from cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in peacekeeping operations will be undertaken during this period.

12. In view of the developments in Angola, Cambodia, Somalia and the former Yugoslavia, the Unit also proposes to undertake a study on successor arrangements to peacekeeping operations which would consolidate peace.

13. The Unit is responsible for the development of institutional memory on peacekeeping to assist in the planning, conduct, management and support of ongoing and future operations. To fulfil this function, the Unit has established a Resource Centre where relevant data on peacekeeping is being systematically stored, both electronically and in hard copy. The Resource Centre collects and stores reports and documents from past and present peacekeeping operations (see para. 19 (d) below), together with assessments, recommendations and experiences of troop-contributing countries and studies or publications on peacekeeping done by national and research institutions. During the period up to 30 June 1998, the Resource Centre will continue to be strengthened by additional acquisitions and progressive automation of the database.

14. The Office of Internal Oversight Services, in paragraphs 9 to 14 of its second annual report (A/51/432, annex), and the Secretary-General and the Office in their reports on the in-depth evaluation of

peacekeeping operations,[3] emphasized the importance of establishing a documentation centre to assist field offices by providing reference material on past experiences, standard operating procedures, policies and guidelines. Accordingly, an on-line computer link will be established with peacekeeping missions to enable them to access information. During this period, the Unit also expects to respond to requests from peacekeeping operations concerning lessons learned from past experiences in specific situations. It will continue to provide inputs in the planning of new operations and monitor, in collaboration with relevant Secretariat units, the implementation of the recommendations made in its studies. The Unit produces an annual report on the status of implementation of lessons learned from peacekeeping operations. The first report was issued in December 1996; a second report is planned for December 1997.

VII. Resource requirements

A. Post requirements

	Regular budget		*Temporary posts*							
			Support account		*Other*		*Gratis personnel*		*Total*	
	1996-1997	*1998-1999*[a]	*1996/1997*	*1997/1998*[b]	*1996/1997*	*1997/1998*[b]	*1996/1997*	*1997/1998*[b]	*1996/1997*	*1997/1998*[b]
Professional category and above										
Under-Secretary-General	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Assistant Secretary-General	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
D-2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
D-1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
P-5	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—
P-4	—	—	—	1	2	—	—	—	2	1
P-3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
P-2/P-1	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	1	1
Subtotal	**1**	**1**	**—**	**2**	**3**	**—**	**1**	**—**	**5**	**3**
General Service category										
Principal level	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other level	1	1	—	1	1	—	—	—	2	2
Subtotal	**1**	**1**	**—**	**1**	**1**	**—**	**—**	**—**	**2**	**2**
Grand total	**2**	**2**	**—**	**3**	**4**	**—**	**1**[c]	**—**	**7**	**5**

[a] As contained in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 (A/52/6 (Sect. 3)).
[b] 1 January to 30 June 1998.
[c] One gratis military officer completed his assignment with the Lessons Learned Unit in February 1997.

15. On its inception in April 1995, the Lessons Learned Unit was provided with two posts (one D-1 post for the Chief of Unit and one General Service post for a research assistant), which continue to be funded under the regular budget. In December 1995, a trust fund to support the lessons learned mechanism was established, which provided additional post and non-post resources for the Unit. Currently, the trust fund

[3] E/AC.51/1994/3 and Corr.1, para. 10; E/AC.51/1995/2 and Corr.1, paras. 16-18; E/AC.51/1996/3 and Corr.1, paras. 9 and 10.

provides for the funding of four posts (two P-4, one P-2/1 and one General Service level). Under the current arrangement with fund donors, it is expected that funding for the four posts will cease on 31 December 1997.

Requirements for the period from 1 January to 30 June 1998

16. In his recent report on the support account for peacekeeping operations (A/51/890), the Secretary-General proposed the creation of three new temporary posts for the Lessons Learned Unit: one at the P-4 level, one at the P-2/1 level and one General Service level. However, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, asserting that all organizational units involved in the backstopping of peacekeeping operations should have a lessons learning function as their permanent responsibility, did not recommend the establishment of the three new posts (see A/51/906 and Corr.1, para. 21). The General Assembly, in its resolution 51/239, requested the Secretary-General to submit proposals on resources and structure to strengthen the functions and to ensure the sharing and application of experience gained in peacekeeping operations.

17. Following a comprehensive review of the structure of the Lessons Learned Unit, and a reassessment of its resource needs, the Secretary-General remains convinced that the functions of the Unit cannot be met from the remaining two dedicated posts for the lessons learned function financed from the regular budget (one D-1, one General Service level) following the anticipated cessation on 31 December 1997 of voluntary funding for other extrabudgetary posts currently available to the Unit. Nor can the function be performed on an ad hoc basis by existing staff of other units in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

18. The Secretary-General believes that his staffing proposals for the lessons learned function will enable the Unit to carry out its programme of work for 1997/1998 within the context of the proposed organization structure of the Unit set out below.

Organizational structure

19. The proposed structure of the Unit covers three distinct functional areas: (a) research and analysis and monitoring progress of implementation of lessons learned; (b) coordination and sharing of experiences with Member States, and organizations and bodies concerned; and (c) maintaining and strengthening institutional memory on peacekeeping. The Unit is organized as follows:

(a) *Office of the Chief of the Unit.* The Chief of the Unit is responsible for planning, organizing and directing all the activities of the Unit. The Office will comprise the Chief of the Unit and an administrative assistant (at the General Service level), whose functions will be to provide administrative support for all activities of the Unit.

(b) *Coordination and sharing of experiences and monitoring the implementation of lessons learned.* The Coordination Officer, under the direction of the Chief of the Unit, will be responsible for all coordination and liaison functions of the Unit, including coordination with Member States, regional organizations, the United Nations Secretariat, specialized agencies, peacekeeping missions, research institutions and non-governmental organizations to share experience in peacekeeping. He/she will also be responsible for the collection of experiences from various peacekeeping operations, troop-contributing countries, the United Nations Secretariat, specialized agencies, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations and disseminating reports and publications of the Unit to all concerned. This function will also include planning and organizing lessons learned seminars or workshops, consultations with external experts, visits of lessons learned teams to the field and monitoring the progress of implementation of lessons learned.

(c) *Research and analysis*. The research analyst will assist the Chief of the Unit in undertaking all research and analysis functions of the Unit. He/she will assist in planning and organizing all studies of the Unit including publication of its reports and documents.

(d) *Maintenance of the Resource Centre*. The Resource Centre will essentially constitute the "institutional memory" of the United Nations Secretariat on peacekeeping and will be maintained by a research assistant (General Service level). Functioning under the Chief of the Unit, the research assistant will be responsible for systematically storing relevant data on peacekeeping, both electronically and in hard copy. The Resource Centre will collect and store reports and documents from past and present peacekeeping operations, such as end-of-mission reports and assessments of Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, Force Commanders and other senior mission officials, technical survey or reconnaissance mission reports, rules of engagement, status-of-mission agreements, status-of-forces agreements, mission standard operating procedures and other policy documents. Studies and publications on peacekeeping done by national and research institutions will also be collected and stored in the Resource Centre. An on-line computer link will be established with peacekeeping missions to enable them to access information.

20. In the light of the foregoing, the Secretary-General resubmits his request for the establishment of three new posts in the Lessons Learned Unit (one P-4, one P-2/1 and one General Service level) to be funded from the support account as originally proposed (see A/51/890). The three new posts would be created initially for the period from 1 January to 30 June 1998.

New posts

21. One P-4 post is required for a Coordination Officer who would be responsible for all coordination and liaison functions of the Unit, including the collection and analysis of experiences from various peacekeeping operations, troop-contributing countries, the United Nations secretariat, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations. The incumbent would also be responsible for the collection and analysis of studies on peacekeeping operations prepared by national, research and academic institutions, as well as the planning and organization of lessons learned seminars or workshops, consultations with external experts and visits of lessons learned teams to the field. The incumbent would assist in the preparation of lessons learned reports and other documents of the Unit and also be responsible for drafting recommendations for implementation by various Secretariat departments and units and for the consideration of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and for monitoring the implementation of lessons learned. In addition, he/she would serve as rapporteur during internal consultations and seminars or workshops, and would lead the team for the study of UNMIH/UNSMIH.

22. A P-2/1 post is requested for a junior research analyst (political and civil affairs). Under the direction of the Chief of the Unit, the incumbent would undertake research and analysis of peacekeeping operations, covering their political and civil affairs aspects in depth, and would draft reports of seminars, workshops and expert meetings. The incumbent would serve as rapporteur during internal consultations and seminars or workshops and assist in the preparation of concept papers, lessons learned reports and other documents of the Unit. In addition, he/she would assist the team in the study on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in peacekeeping operations.

23. A General Service post is requested for an administrative assistant, required to provide support for all the activities of the Unit, which include seminars, expert meetings, field visits and publication of documents. The administrative assistant would prepare and distribute documentation for internal meetings, consultations and workshops and assist the Coordination Officer in all administrative and coordination functions. The administrative assistant would also assist in organizing, managing and maintaining files, books, audio and video tapes and other related acquisitions of the Resource Centre.

B. Non-post resources

24. Non-post resources in support of the Lessons Learned Unit are provided under the support account for peacekeeping operations as well as from extrabudgetary sources. Provision was made in the support account for the period from 1 July 1997 to 30 June 1998 for the travel of staff in the Unit ($38,400) as well as funds for books and materials for the Resource Centre ($2,500). Additional non-post resources are provided from contributions to the trust fund to support the lessons learned mechanism. As at 15 August 1997, voluntary funds in the amount of $313,000 were allocated to the Unit to provide for general temporary assistance ($26,600), travel of staff ($60,400), conference services ($13,300), supplies, furniture and equipment ($48,800), external printing ($10,600), consultants and experts ($56,000) and programme support costs ($97,300). No additional requirements for non-post resources are requested for the Unit in the context of the present report.

VIII. Conclusion

25. The cost of one P-4, one P-2/1 and one General Service post for the period from 1 January to 30 June 1998 is estimated at $132,250. Should the General Assembly approve his request, it is the Secretary-General's expectation that these costs could be met from within the resources approved by the Assembly for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, within the support account for peacekeeping operations, for the period from 1 July 1997 to 30 June 1998.